

Approved For Release 25X1
2008/11/03 :
CIA-RDP85T00875R001000090

De

Approved For Release
2008/11/03 :
CIA-RDP85T00875R001000090
completed

Top Secret



DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

Developments in Indochina

State Dept. review completed

25X1

Top Secret

25X1

125

25 January 1973

25X1

Page Denied

25X1

DEVELOPMENTS IN INDOCHINA

(Information as of 1500)

SOUTH VIETNAM

Indications persist that the Communists plan heavier fighting before the cease-fire becomes effective. Saigon is drawing up plans for the cease-fire period and is warning the populace to be vigilant.

NORTH VIETNAM

Vietnamese Communist commentary on the agreements has been sparse and has followed predictable lines. Hanoi is arranging to send a 20-man cease-fire delegation to Saigon on Sunday. Swedish Premier Palme has been invited to visit North Vietnam.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

Peking and Moscow have welcomed the Vietnam agreement.

CAMBODIA

Lon Nol has indicated his approval of the Vietnam cease-fire agreement, and the government is planning to suspend all offensive military operations by the end of the month. The Communists appear to be renewing military pressure against the isolated northern town of Kompong Thom. A senior Cambodian Army officer believes that Sirik Matak's chances for becoming vice-president are poor.

LAOS

Government leaders are optimistic over prospects for an early cease-fire as fighting continues in the north and south.

25 January 1973

25X1

25X1

SOUTH VIETNAM

Communist offensive activity still consists mainly of light shellings, but indications persist that heavier fighting is planned before the cease-fire becomes effective.

Enemy gunners in the northern provinces launched the largest number of shelling attacks in six months yesterday, but most of the attacks consisted of less than 20 rounds. Light shellings were also reported on the increase in the delta.

25X1

25 January 1973

25X1

25X1

Saigon Plans for Cease-Fire Period

The Saigon government is drawing up plans for the cease-fire period designed to counter the Communists by improving Saigon's image as an economically and politically viable government.

25X1

Prime Minister Khiem has directed government ministries to complete such plans on a crash basis within the next two weeks. Programs to be stepped up will include the resettlement of war refugees; assistance to ethnic minorities; clearing of land and building new hamlets; and the reconstruction of schools, communications facilities, and roads. Khiem stressed, in particular, the need for projects in remote areas such as the Central Highlands, where Viet Cong contact with the people is likely to be greatest. He also said the plans drafted by the various ministries would be used as the basis for requests for continuing US economic aid.

25X1

Khiem also emphasized the need for the military establishment to change its functions and priorities. He said that region commanders would be given authority to involve themselves legitimately in civilian affairs and that province chiefs must be aware of their political as well as their military duties. The Prime Minister asserted that the army must be diligent in protecting areas under Saigon's control, but that no attempt should be made to go into Communist-controlled areas. In addition, Khiem said that for propaganda purposes, Saigon would cease talking about "neutralizing the Viet Cong infrastructure," and would speak instead of "maintaining law and order."

To gain the support of the people, a special fund of about \$65 million has been established for political and propaganda activities. The Education Ministry is to try to ensure that students work for the government rather than for the Viet Cong. They

25 January 1973

25X1

25X1

[redacted]

are to be used to put up government flags, distribute leaflets, and draft anti-Communist slogans. Khiem also asserted that harsh measures to control street demonstrations and other disturbances would be counterproductive, adding that order must be maintained without repression. [redacted]

25X1

25X1

South Vietnamese Reaction to the Cease-Fire
Announcement

The Saigon government is taking the line that the cease-fire agreement represents a victory for its forces; at the same time it is cautioning the people to be vigilant. In his address to the nation announcing the agreement, President Thieu asserted that the Communists had been defeated militarily and were forced to sign. Thieu warned that before the agreement takes effect the Communists will try to seize control of territory and population. The President asserted that the people cannot exercise their right of self-determination in a free and democratic manner as long as North Vietnamese troops remain in the South. Calling on the people to unite, he stated that a lasting peace depended on the country's military, political, and economic strength.

Independent and opposition political figures, as well as the Saigon press, are sounding similar themes in warning that the struggle against the Communists is not over. Some prominent figures have told US Embassy officers that they are particularly concerned over the lack of any provision for the withdrawal of North Vietnamese troops and are worried about the skill of the Communists in political infighting. Presidential aide Nha, going beyond President Thieu's remarks on self-determination, told newsmen that new general elections would be "out of the question" until the North Vietnamese troops withdraw. In addition, some important Vietnamese are voicing fears for their own personal safety and are taking special precautions to try to thwart any Communist assassination attempts.

25X1

25 January 1973

25X1

NORTH VIETNAM

The Vietnamese Communists have said little for the public record so far on the agreement. The commentary that has appeared mixes claims of victory with promises to continue the struggle and dark warnings about Saigon's evil intentions. Pham Van Dong, speaking on 24 January while the North Vietnamese leadership was seeing Foreign Minister Trinh off to Paris, touted the agreement as a "great victory" for the Communists. He added that although Hanoi intended to honor the terms of the pact, it nevertheless was determined to step up the struggle until victory was achieved. The Viet Cong's Madame Binh told reporters in Paris that she and her colleagues would also respect the agreement, but she claimed that President Thieu's recent statements suggested he had no such intention.

[redacted] the pact achieves four specific goals from their point of view. First, it contains a statement that the US respects the "independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity" of Vietnam. Second, it is a "valuable international legal document" that establishes the right of the South Vietnamese to self-determination. Third, it ends the American military involvement in Vietnam. Fourth, it stresses the temporary, nonpolitical nature of the DMZ.

25X1

North Vietnamese to Saigon

Hanoi has asked the present International Control Commission (ICC) to arrange a special flight next Sunday (28 January) to bring a North Vietnamese cease-fire delegation to Saigon. The ICC is tentatively planning to have its regularly scheduled

25X1

25 January 1973

-4-

25X1

25X1

[redacted]

flight lay over in Hanoi until Sunday, and to leave for Saigon via Vientiane at 8 A.M. (the hour the cease-fire goes into effect) with 20 North Vietnamese representatives aboard. [redacted]

25X1

Palme to Hanoi?

The Swedish press agency reports that Pham Van Dong has invited Premier Palme to visit North Vietnam. [redacted]

25X1

25 January 1973

25X1

25X1

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

Peking has yet to comment authoritatively on the Vietnam agreement, but its reaction is likely to be similar in tone to a brief statement issued by the Foreign Ministry's Information Department on 24 January. The statement "welcomed" the agreement as conforming to the interests of the Vietnamese and American people and as "conducive to the relaxation of tension" in Asia. Chinese spokesmen and diplomats have been stressing for some time the benefits likely to flow from a Vietnam agreement, and Peking no doubt will continue this line, perhaps in more specific ways. Earlier, the New China News Agency had re-broadcast the joint US-North Vietnam statement announced by President Nixon. [REDACTED] 25X1

Soviets Pleased with Vietnam Signing

The Soviets were quick to report the initialing of the Vietnam agreements, and politburo member Kirilenko used a speech at a scientific conference to weigh in with a statement hailing the moves as an "important milestone." Kirilenko noted that conclusion of the agreement is not yet completed, but his cautious phrasing is probably a result of the USSR's desire to be covered on the off-chance that the agreement is not signed on schedule. Not surprisingly, Kirilenko portrayed the agreement as a victory for the Vietnamese people and for the socialist community that had rendered all-round support and assistance to the "forces campaigning for peace in Indochina." Soviet satisfaction was further evidenced when the Foreign Ministry departed from normal practice and granted a request by the Associated Press for a statement. (This release echoes Kirilenko's remarks.)

Soviet media began carrying extensive comment on 25 January. A *Pravda* editorial, for example, praised the initialing of the agreement as "important evidence of realism" in international relations and expressed the hope that the pact will be "signed and consistently implemented." [REDACTED] 25X1

25X1

25 January 1973

25X1

25X1

Hanoi Aid Mission Returns Home

The North Vietnamese aid delegation, led by Politburo member Le Thanh Nghi, arrived on 23 January in Pyongyang, probably its last stop before returning home. In the past two months, Nghi's group has visited China, the Soviet Union, and most Communist countries in Europe, concluding annual economic and military aid agreements in each country.

25X1

25 January 1973

-7-

25X1

25X1

CAMBODIA

In an address to the nation on 24 January, President Lon Nol described the Vietnam cease-fire agreement as a "good omen" that indicates peace will be achieved not only in Vietnam, but also in Cambodia. Lon Nol stressed that Vietnamese Communist troops no longer have any reason to remain in Cambodia and must be withdrawn. The Cambodian leader also noted that even if the North Vietnamese wanted to continue the war, they cannot do so because they can no longer bear the costs and because they will be compelled to heed international pressure for peace. Turning to the Khmer insurgents, Lon Nol again admitted that they present a problem to the government, but one that is not insoluble. He repeated his belief that the insurgents are merely misguided nationalists and voiced confidence that they can be induced to rally to the government.

25X1

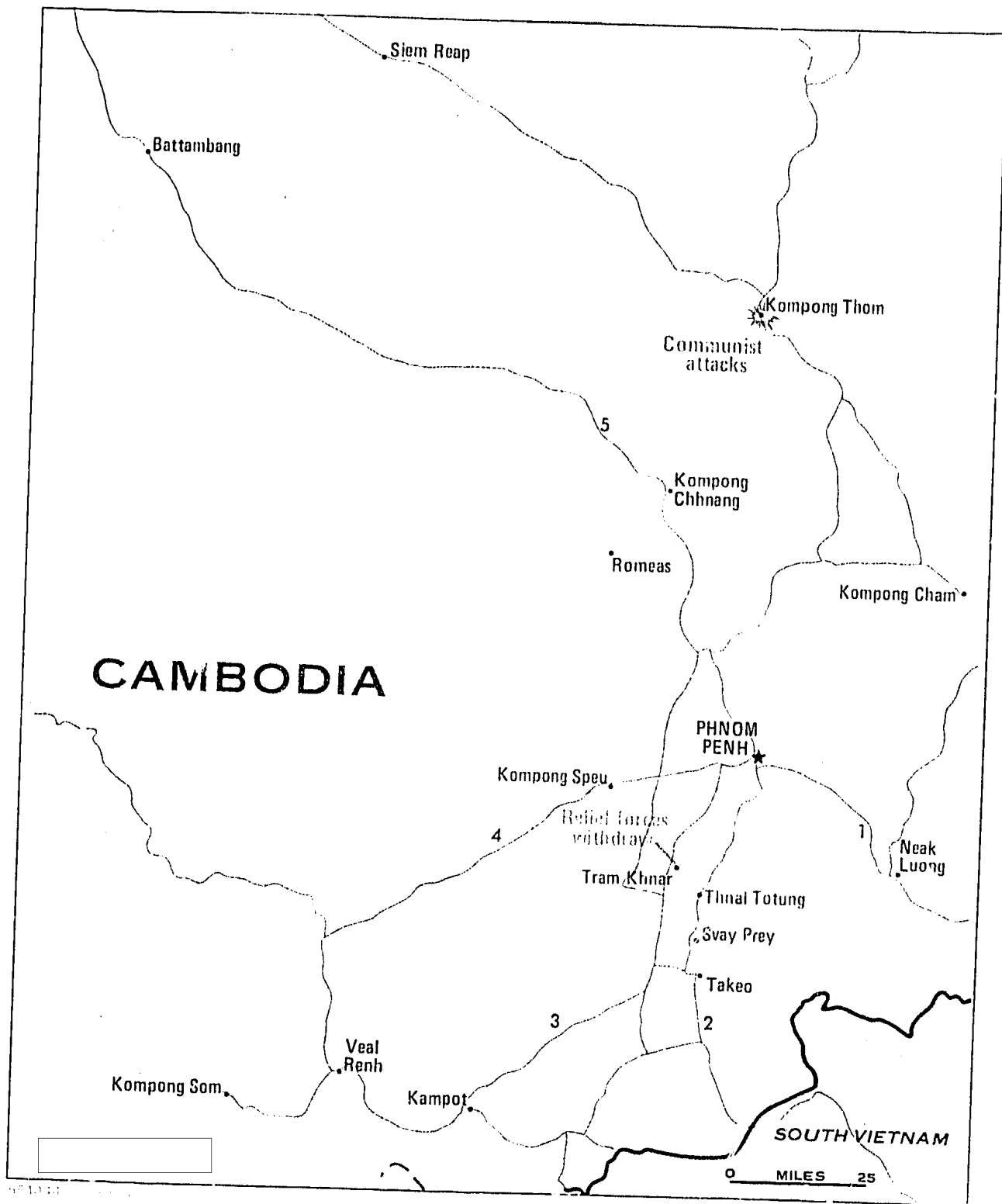
A Unilateral Cease-fire

The US Embassy in Phnom Penh has reported that following the signing of the Vietnam agreement in Paris this Saturday, the Cambodian Government will formally announce the suspension of all offensive military operations by the Cambodian Army. The standdown will become effective on 29 or 30 January. Although Sihanouk and the Khmer Communists have not yet commented on the Vietnam agreement, up to now their line has been that a Vietnam cease-fire will not affect the situation in Cambodia and that the fighting there will go on.

25X1

25 January 1973

25X1



25X1

The Military Situation

Communist forces launched ground probes and shelled government positions around the town of Kompong Thom on 23 and 24 January. Preliminary reports indicate that the Communists cut the road connecting the town with a government strong-point on its southern defensive perimeter. In December 1972, the Communists subjected the isolated northern provincial capital to a series of similar attacks that lasted about two weeks.

To the west, government reinforcements at Romeas in Kompong Chhnang Province are continuing to evacuate the wounded from that town and to resupply its 300-man garrison. Communist units east of Romeas have been directing harassing fire on the town, but few casualties have resulted. A government relief column from Kompong Chhnang City that has been trying to move overland toward Romeas has been halted by Communist harassing attacks and other difficulties.

No new developments have been reported on government clearing operations along Route 2 between Phnom Penh and Takeo, and that portion of the highway remains closed. Elsewhere in the south, the government reinforcements from Phnom Penh that recently helped to relieve Communist pressure on Tram Khnar on Route 3, some 25 miles southwest of the capital, have been withdrawn. Local Cambodian units now have the task of retaking several small positions south of Tram Khnar.

25X1

25X1

25 January 1973

Page Denied



25X1

LAOS

There is guarded optimism in Vientiane over the prospects for an early cease-fire. Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma in a public statement and in an address to a closed session of the National Assembly has expressed hope that an end to the fighting in Laos could be arranged by 12 February. At the same time, he cautioned that any movement toward a cease-fire would depend on the attitude the Lao Communist negotiators show during the coming sessions of the Vientiane peace talks. Souvanna also conferred with military leaders and urged them to be ready to counter increased Communist activity during the coming weeks.

25X1

Communist Comings and Goings

The US Embassy in Vientiane has reported that the Chinese chargé in the Lao capital will leave on 27 January for consultations in Peking.

The flight from Hanoi that was to bring a group of Lao Communist negotiators back to Vientiane after consultations in Sam Neua has now been rescheduled, and the Communist team will be dropped off in Vientiane on 28 January by the same aircraft that will carry some North Vietnamese officials to Saigon.

25X1

Fighting on Three Fronts

An irregular force in the Sala Phou Khoun area is battling Communist infantry and armor units for control of the road junction. Field commanders report that they engaged a sizable enemy force on 25 January, but that the fighting so far has been indecisive. To the east, another irregular force has been resupplied and is again moving to attack enemy units guarding the Communist logistic base at Muong Soui. Lao Army commanders consider the halting of the enemy supply flow westward through Muong Soui

25 January 1973

25X1

25X1

[REDACTED]

vital to the success of the operation to retake Sala Phou Khoun. Communist defenders at Muong Soui repulsed an earlier attempt by the irregulars to push into the base, and the movement of additional enemy units toward the area suggests that they plan to make a determined stand there.

In the south, heavy fighting is reported east of Muong Phalane. Communist units are attempting to push through government positions along Route 9 east of the town and have harassed irregular units guarding the northern and southern approaches to Muong Phalane.

[REDACTED]

25X1

Farther south, irregular troops near the Bolovens Plateau are advancing slowly toward the provincial capital of Saravane. Communist units moved in behind the irregulars on 24 January and drove a Lao Army force from positions along Route 16 some 13 miles west of Saravane.

[REDACTED]

25X1

25 January 1973

[REDACTED]

25X1